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- 2.— *The American Conflict: a History of the Great Rebellion in the United States of America, 1860–65. Its Causes, Incidents, and Results: intended to exhibit especially its Moral and Political Phases, with the Drift and Progress of American Opinion respecting Human Slavery from 1776 to the Close of the War for the Union.* By HORACE GREELEY. *Illustrated by Portraits on Steel of Generals, Statesmen, and other Eminent Men: Views of Places of Historic Interest: Maps, Diagrams of Battle-Fields, Naval Actions, etc.: from Official Sources.* Vol. II. Hartford: O. D. Case & Co. 1866. 8vo. pp. 782.

MR. GREELEY has brought to a close, in the second volume, his History of the great Rebellion. The enormous task has been carried through with fairness of intention and industry; the narrative is condensed, the language plain and intelligible. It is fortunate that a work to which the author's reputation and position are sure to give wide circulation possesses such merits. To have written this book constitutes not the least of the services which Mr. Greeley has rendered to the country, and which place him among the conspicuous men of his generation. The second volume is devoted chiefly to military, as the first volume was to civil events. It is the clearest and most compendious account yet published of the operations of the war from the beginning of the year 1862 to the suppression of the Rebellion. Mr. Greeley's power of condensed statement and his great skill in dealing with details are evident throughout its pages. But the volume is as a whole less interesting than the preceding one, and contains nothing equal in worth to the historic summary which occupies the first half of the first volume. Few men are more competent than Mr. Greeley to trace the history of the great contest between the principles of liberty and those of slavery, which was foreshadowed in the debates of the Constitutional Convention of 1789, but was, by a series of compromises then agreed upon, postponed for a few years, to be carried on more and more fiercely in Congress and on the platform, until it was happily fought to a close upon the battle-field. Few men possess a more thorough acquaintance with the minutest details of the conflict, or are better qualified to estimate justly the relative importance of events and the relative influence of prominent men during this period. Few have a clearer insight into the causes that conspired to bring about those events, or to shape the policy of those men; and few are better able to understand, and to make others understand, the nature and varying fortunes of the struggles of parties. In his position as editor for nearly thirty years of an influential journal, Mr. Greeley has been obliged to apply to the questions of the day the knowledge acquired by careful

study of American history from his point of view, and to submit it to the test of friendly and of hostile criticism, as well as of events. His intimate personal acquaintance with the prominent men of his own party, and in some cases with prominent opponents also, and his familiarity with the working of the wires that, invisible to the ordinary spectator, control the action of apparently automatic persons or assemblies, constitute additional qualifications for the writing of our political history from the moment when the several States met together to devise a frame of government under which they might "form a more perfect Union," to the moment when the writer, having to deal with living persons and existing political organizations, is exposed to the influence of partisan and of personal prejudices and prepossessions.

But whenever and wherever such prejudices or prepossessions come into play, those of Mr. Greeley's qualifications for the work in hand which are due to the proximity of his post of observation or to his actual participation in the events with which he has to deal become positive disqualifications. He would be more or less than human, if he were able in his history to treat with entire impartiality matters with regard to which he was, even during the period of its composition, daily taking sides in his journal. He cannot reasonably be expected to do exact justice to political organizations of which he still espouses one and assails the other; nor, with the best intentions in the world, to be uninfluenced by personal sympathies and antipathies in what he has to say of members of his own or of the opposite party; nor to estimate at its just value the share of the several actors in scenes wherein he took a leading part himself.

With regard to questions no longer in issue, and to persons who have no present political importance, a conscientious writer might be expected carefully to review and seriously to modify opinions expressed in the heat of the moment; and this Mr. Greeley has done. The questions that arose between the Administration and General McClellan, for example, seem to be treated with fairness, and a disposition is shown to do justice to the military qualities and achievements of officers with whose political opinions and manner of conducting the war the writer had no sympathy. Whatever defects characterize the narratives of military campaigns, which form so considerable a portion of this volume, are justly attributable to incompleteness of materials, haste in composition, and the eminently pacific character of Mr. Greeley's temperament.

So, also, Mr. Greeley seems now to admit, as he would not have done at the time, that the result of elections in the Border States during the war was due to military interference, and that the Administration

majority in Indiana in 1864 was swelled "unfairly," though he has made in neither case a serious effort to investigate the nature and extent of such interference or unfairness. In speaking of the technically illegal arrests of persons or seizures of property by the Administration, he manifests a candid desire to represent the facts as they occurred, but has failed to set them forth with fulness and precision, or to attribute to them so great an influence as they really exercised upon the elections. And in general, where the personages or the events spoken of have ceased to possess political significance,—have become from Mr. Greeley's point of view historical,—he deals with them in the spirit, if not entirely with the faculty, of an historian. We are bound, therefore, to presume that in all cases where he writes in the spirit of the conductor of a political journal, or of a party leader, or of a man with personal ends in view and personal sympathies or hostilities to gratify, the fault lies less in his will than in his temperament.

But, desiring the reader to bear in mind that we would in no wise impugn Mr. Greeley's motives, we are obliged to add, that the instances in which he seems to forget that he has undertaken to write a history, not editorial articles for the New York Tribune, are neither few nor unimportant. While, for example, he does not deny that some hearty supporters of the war were to be found in the ranks of the Democratic party, he indicates on many pages a belief that the mass of that party was hostile to its prosecution; and he interprets its successes in the elections of 1862 as indicative, not so much of dissatisfaction with the conduct of military operations, with the policy of the Administration in the matter of slavery, or with its arbitrary interference with rights of person or property, as of opposition to the further prosecution of hostilities. Thus he says: "It is quite probable that, had a popular election been held at any time during the year following the 4th of July, 1862, on the question of continuing the war or arresting it on the best attainable terms, a majority would have voted for peace." And again: "The fall elections of 1862 had resulted in a general Opposition triumph; because the reflecting and unimpassioned had been led, by our recent reverses and our general disappointment, to doubt the ability of the government to put down the Rebellion."

But Mr. Greeley neglects to advert to the important fact, that the victories of the Democratic party in 1862 were gained, save in one or two instances, and those of slight importance, not by the augmentation of its own vote, but by the falling off in the Republican vote; as the successes of the Administration in 1863 were gained, even in Ohio, not by the diminution of the Opposition strength, but by the coming out of Republican voters; that thus in both cases the results indicate an in-

crease of absolute, and not of relative strength; showing that, even on Mr. Greeley's hypothesis that the Democratic party was as a party hostile to the war, its victories in 1862 prove nothing more than that the floating mass of voters, who determine almost all our elections, stayed at home in order to indicate dissatisfaction, not with the purpose to prosecute the war, but with the manner in which it was prosecuted. So their coming to the polls in 1863 indicated a contrary feeling, and also indicated in Ohio and some other States strong opposition to the opinions avowed by such men as Vallandigham, the vote for whom was, however, undoubtedly swelled by many who, disagreeing with his views, yet regarded him as a martyr in the cause of freedom of speech.

But even if the result of the elections of 1862 can properly be regarded as proof that the Democratic party comprised at that time an absolute majority of the electors, (exclusive of those who were serving in the army or navy,) it still remains to be shown that such majority was composed wholly of men who believed that the further prosecution of the war was either undesirable or hopeless. Now Mr. Greeley assumes, throughout the volume, that the soldiers were believers in the desirableness and in the sureness of eventual success; yet according to his own figures, which are not so complete or so conveniently tabulated as could be wished, one sixth of the army vote was thrown for Democratic candidates in the earlier stages of the war, and nearly one third for General McClellan in the Presidential election of 1864. If we presume — which seems only fair, considering the influences, direct or indirect, likely to have been brought to bear upon the soldiers by their Republican superiors — that a similar proportion at least of the home vote for the Democratic ticket was thrown by supporters of the war, we make the majority in favor of its prosecution much larger than that which the returns show for the Opposition. This would be a sufficient refutation of Mr. Greeley's statement, but is very far from doing justice to a great and patriotic political organization. The truth is, that the feeling of a nation is not expressed in the returns of elections. Nothing lies like figures. The motives which determine men's action at the polls are too numerous and too complicated to admit of being thus reduced to one simple term. But Mr. Greeley is too old a politician, too thoroughly a politician, too old a political editor, too exclusively a political editor, to escape self-deception in this matter. He is accustomed to regard the American people as divided into two great parties; — the one, on the whole, decidedly right, that is, of the same general way of thinking with himself; the other decidedly wrong, that is, entertaining opinions diametrically opposed to his own. He mistakes party cries and the heated talk of the platform for settled

beliefs, and considers a party struggle as a contest between principles. He commits a similar mistake to that made by many of us during the war, who interpreted the opposition to the Jeff Davis administration of the supporters of Mr. Vance for the gubernatorial chair in North Carolina, to mean hostility to the Confederacy, when the contest was really upon the same party line on which political campaigns had been carried on in the old North State for many years.

We should resort to a very different class of proofs, and one more trustworthy, if less specious, than election returns, to establish the fact that the people of the loyal States, and the "most rational and unimpassioned" among them, were from first to last, by a decided majority, in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war, and were confident that success would come surely, however slowly, to the national arms. We should call attention to the sacrifices of blood, money, and time that were made in every State north of the Ohio and the Potomac, in every county, every township, and almost every family, for the national cause; to the noble services of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, — hastily dismissed by Mr. Greeley in two pages of the Appendix, — which, as organizations complementary to the regular service, receiving little countenance from the government, supported and carried on with wonderful efficiency by voluntary effort, have never in the history of any war been equalled; to the sympathy with the soldier in the field, with the suffering, the wounded, the bereaved, manifested everywhere; to the indications of the popular faith in ultimate triumph, even after sore defeat, afforded by the newspapers of city and country alike, and not of those only which held to the Republican faith, (for the thoroughly disloyal ones can be counted on one's fingers,) and by the more courageous language held by members of Congress on their return to Washington after a sojourn among their constituents. We should appeal to the recollection of every loyal reader, to say whether the instances of men of mark among his own neighbors who, having sincerely and heartily espoused the national cause at the outset, failed or faltered subsequently, were not very few. We should advert to the circumstance that scarcely a single representative of the people in State legislatures or in Congress, whose voice had once been given for the war, afterwards declared himself against it, but that, on the contrary, the number of prominent men who gave it their support increased from month to month. We should note, as important additional proof of the popular determination to bring the war to a successful close, at whatever sacrifice, the progress of public opinion in favor of emancipation as a means to victory, as evidenced in many ways, and as recorded in the votes of Congress from session to session. We should refer

to the very general complaints of the lack of vigor and of confidence in the people on the part of the Administration, which found expression through newspapers representing more than one shade of opinion, town-meetings, State legislatures and conventions, Congressional speeches and action, and the numerous deputations from various classes that visited the White House. There were certainly seasons of doubt, distrust, discouragement, even gloom, in which traitors who had been silent or hypocritically patriotic threw off all disguise; but those seasons were remarkably brief, and the reaction came with surprising promptitude and force. The leading Tories, moreover, had a very much more considerable following in their speech-making than they could ever have had in corresponding acts; and this is sufficiently shown by the fact that when in office, so far from venturing to take the shortest step toward a discontinuance of active effort by their respective States to support the Administration in the prosecution of the war, they sensibly moderated their language. Thus Mr. Greeley says: "Governor Seymour, who addressed a large gathering in the New York Academy of Music (in July, 1863) in language carefully weighed beforehand and *tempered by the obvious requirements of his official position*, was far more measured and cautious in his assaults and imputations than were the great majority of his *compatriots*." [*Sic!*]

In point of fact, the harangues delivered against the war during its continuance were of as little practical moment, as slightly indicative of the existence of an active feeling of opposition to its further prosecution, as was the talk of Democratic stump-speakers before the firing upon Fort Sumter. And had any attempt been made to condense the heated words of such men as Vallandigham or Thomas H. Seymour of Connecticut into overt action against the government, there would have been a popular uprising against them only equalled by that which followed the discharge of Beauregard's cannon upon the national flag. The South, in both cases, mistook a party slogan for a declaration of principles, as did also a few patriots in the North, prominent among whom stands Mr. Greeley. His temperament, which is signally deficient in the large hope that is the soul of courage and the parent of success, as is shown by his proverbial habit of inferring defeat from the first returns of a contested election, contributed to fortify him in this error. His views before the breaking out of hostilities are well known. Of his feelings during the first two years of the conflict, we have the following candid confession in the pages entitled "Explanatory," at the commencement of the second volume of the History:—

"Up to the occurrence of those riots [the draft riots in New York city, of July, 1863] I had not been habitually confident of an auspicious immediate

issue from our momentous struggle. Never doubting that the *ultimate* result would be such as to vindicate emphatically the profoundly wise beneficence of God, it had seemed to me more probable — in view of the protracted and culpable complicity of the North in whatever of guilt or shame, of immorality or debasement, was inseparable from the existence and growth of American slavery — that a temporary triumph might accrue to the Confederates.

“So long as it seemed probable that our war would result more immediately in a Rebel triumph, I had no wish, no heart, to be one of its historians; and it was only when — following closely on the heels of the great Union successes of July, 1863, at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and Helena — I had seen the Rebellion resisted and defeated in this city of New York, (where its ideas and vital aims were more generally cherished than even in South Carolina or Louisiana,) that I confidently hoped for an immediate and palpable rather than a remote and circuitous triumph of the Union, now and evermore blended inseparably with emancipation, — with the legal and national recognition of every man's right to himself. Thenceforward, with momentary intervals of anxiety, depression, and doubt, it has been to me a labor of love to devote every available hour to the history of the American conflict.”

The habit of mind here indicated is exactly opposed to that evinced by Mr. Seward in his famous “sixty days” predictions. Apprehension, happily groundless, as the event has proved, was felt that the overconfidence of the Secretary of State might be prejudicial to our interests abroad; but there can be no doubt what effect a want of faith so absolute as that of Mr. Greeley would have had upon foreign powers, had Mr. Seward's portfolio been in his hands. Disguise it as he would, it must have colored his despatches. And its influence upon his associates in the Cabinet, and upon the President himself, might have been seriously depressing. It crippled, as it was, Mr. Greeley's influence as editor of a leading journal; and it led him into vagaries — such as his visit to the French Minister at Washington, with a view to the acceptance of Napoleon's proffer of mediation, and his interview with the Rebel emissaries in Canada — which might have been criminal, had he occupied an official position.

But when Mr. Greeley undertakes to declare that “the reflecting and unimpassioned” had as little faith as he, he commits a very grave error, — an error as grave as that of supposing, as he seems to do, that his Niagara expedition was approved by the people, and that Mr. Lincoln's course in that affair was disapproved. On this point he says: “There was a very wide-spread impression that the overture of the Confederates had not been met in the manner best calculated to strengthen the national cause and invigorate the arm of its supporters.”

This unfortunate habit of mistaking his own opinions and sentiments for those of the nation colors Mr. Greeley's views of men as well as



of events, and leaves surprising gaps in his history. The sole quotation, for example, from the voluminous despatches of Mr. Seward (who when named, as he rarely is, is uniformly, with newspaper provincialism, not to say vulgarity, called "Gov." Seward, as Mr. Cameron is denominated "Gen." Cameron) consists of that unfortunate paragraph in the instructions to Mr. Dayton, of April 22, 1861, in which the Secretary of State declares that "the condition of slavery in the several States will remain just the same whether the revolution succeed or fail,"—unfortunate as declaration of intention or as prediction, but representing, except in the use of the term "revolution," the popular belief at the time it was written, and corresponding with Congressional action up to that time. But not a page is given to the history of our diplomatic relations, and no word of acknowledgment of Mr. Seward's great services as Secretary of State is made. The names of Secretaries Stanton and Welles are barely mentioned, and no credit is given to either the War or the Navy Department for the promptitude and efficiency with which, all things considered, they organized and carried on hostilities. Nor are the great services rendered to the land forces by the navy, or the efficacy of the blockade, and its value to the final result, adequately acknowledged.

With regard to the Secretary of the Treasury, the case is different. The financial history of the war occupies, to be sure, only two or three pages, which are imperfect and vague in statement, and hasty, we had almost said slovenly, in style. But this unsatisfactory summary is thus prefaced: "Another and profounder shock to public confidence followed, in the resignation of Hon. Salmon P. Chase as Secretary of the Treasury. Gov. Chase had filled in the public service, through years of doubt, depression, and disaster, the second place in importance, and the first in the magnitude of its requirements, and had discharged its duties with pre-eminent ability, energy, and courage." Considering the differences of opinion which have from the first obtained, even in his own party, with regard to the soundness or the originality of Secretary Chase's financial policy,—considering the further facts that a change in the Treasury Department had been for months before it occurred urged by prominent business men, who were heartily in favor of the war, that there was a remarkable unanimity of opinion in the designation as Mr. Chase's successor of Senator Fessenden, and great gratification at his acceptance of the position, and that the beneficial effect of the change upon the condition of the finances was speedily and sensibly felt,—we cannot express sufficient surprise at so sweeping a statement.

But, moreover, if Mr. Chase filled "the second place in importance,

and the first in the magnitude of its requirements," what place did Abraham Lincoln fill? If the Secretary of the Treasury was at the head of the Administration, what position did the President of the United States occupy? We all know that in fact, as well as in the judgment of the people and of prominent men of all parties, Mr. Lincoln occupied not only nominally, but really, the first place, — first in all senses, — and that whoever in his Cabinet stood second was *secundus magno intervallo*. That there was dissatisfaction at various times with the course pursued by Mr. Lincoln is undoubted; but that dissatisfaction was much more general among politicians than in the Republican rank and file, and those who manifested it most strongly inveighed with greatest bitterness against the weakness of the Cabinet. A very small proportion of the grumblers believed in the superiority of Mr. Chase to Mr. Lincoln, as man, as politician, or as administrator of affairs. The malecontents were not only without popular support, but without a man upon whom they could unite. They may have thought of Mr. Chase as a standard-bearer at one time; but when the Republican Senators who strove to induce Mr. Lincoln to remove Mr. Seward from the State Department found Mr. Chase, upon whom they had counted, wanting at the critical moment, he ceased to have a party even in Washington. A few old friends, among them Mr. Greeley, between whose temperament and that of Mr. Chase there are strong points of similarity, clung to him; but the unanimous nomination of Mr. Lincoln at the Baltimore Convention showed them their weakness.

The paragraph quoted above is not the sole, although it is perhaps the most striking passage, in which Mr. Greeley shows absolute incapacity to appreciate Mr. Lincoln's incalculable services to the nation. Throughout the volume, our President — who with unfaltering hope, unflagging courage, truth to himself, reliance upon God, and trust in the people, performed the greatest labors that devolved upon any man during his administration with signal ability, and carried the greatest popular war ever fought to a successful termination — seems to be studiously kept in the background.

In like manner the services of other men who are known to be personally obnoxious to Mr. Greeley are ignored. Not only, for example, is no allusion made to Mr. Fessenden's short but successful administration of the Treasury Department, but his appointment is not even mentioned, so that a reader unacquainted with the facts would be unable to discover in this volume the name of Mr. Chase's successor.

These instances must suffice to show the great defect of Mr. Greeley's work. The accumulation of additional evidence to the same point would not be difficult, but no amount of it would be sufficient to

show one who had not read the book in how many or in how subtle ways that which we must, with all respect, denominate "Greeleyism" permeates its political chapters. In his editorial articles Mr. Greeley has frequently shown great skill in disposing of an adversary or of an argument, without appearing to notice its existence; but many weapons which are effective in party or personal warfare have no place in the hand of an historian. He who would write a "History of the American Conflict" that shall be read by "our grandchildren"—as Mr. Greeley hopes that his will be—must not only avoid the defects of a newspaper style of composition, but he must still more carefully refrain from regarding persons or events from the stand-point of an editor, of a politician, or of a partisan.

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3. — 1. *The Making of the American Nation, or the Rise and Decline of Oligarchy in the West.* By J. ARTHUR PARTRIDGE. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1866. 8vo. pp. xxxvii., 523.
  2. *On Democracy.* By J. ARTHUR PARTRIDGE. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1866. 8vo. pp. xxiii., 418.

THESE two volumes, although bearing the name of an American publisher on their title-page, are of English authorship and manufacture. We know nothing of their author but what we have learned from the books themselves. His Prefaces are dated from the Reform Club, which affords an indication of his social position; and he shows himself in his writings to be a man who thinks for himself, who has made politics a study, who has uncommon political insight, and who possesses in an uncommon degree "the courage of his opinions." His books are not likely to receive that attention in England which they deserve, for the doctrines which they set forth are in utter opposition to the most deep-rooted English prejudices, and to the opinions of the mass of Englishmen. The style in which the author advocates his doctrines is not fitted to conciliate or to convert those who differ from him, or to attract those who might not be repelled by his creed. He dogmatizes upon open questions; he generalizes from imperfect data; he often makes assertion take the place of argument; and there is little logical precision and method in the arrangement of his discourse, while there is much needless repetition and restatement. The books are political pamphlets swollen into volumes.

But in spite of these defects, Mr. Partridge's works are contributions of value to political science. The author is a consistent and thorough-going democrat. His faith in democracy, and his sentiment con-